

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 059573
ORIGIN SS-25

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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EXDIS/FOR AMBASSADOR

CORRECTED COPY (ITEM 2, PARA 7, LINE 13 OMITTED)

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PEPR, IN

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL LETTER DATED MARCH 8 TO PRIME
MINISTER DESAI

1. PLEASE TRANSMIT TO PRIME MINISTER DESAI THE FOLLOWING
TEXT OF A PRESIDENTIAL LETTER DATED MARCH 8, THE SIGNED
ORIGINAL OF WHICH IS BEING POUCHED.

2. BEGIN TEXT: QTE DEAR PRIME MINISTER DESAI:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR LETTER OF FEBRUARY 7. IN VIEW
OF OUR EARLIER CORRESPONDENCE AND PERSONAL DISCUSSION, I
BELIEVE THAT WE BOTH NOW HAVE A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF
THE FUNDAMENTALS OF OUR POSITIONS ON NUCLEAR ISSUES, AND I
AM SURE YOU SHARE MY INTEREST IN FURTHER EXPLORING THE IMPLI-

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CATIONS OF OUR RESPECTIVE VIEWS. I SHALL ASK AMBASSADOR
GOHEEN TO BE IN TOUCH SOON WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT TO ARRANGE
FOR DISCUSSIONS OF SOME TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM.

I READ WITH CARE YOUR COMMENTS ON THE POSSIBLE DEPLOYMENT
OF ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS. THERE HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIAL
MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS AT ISSUE WITH THESE WEAPONS,

WHICH ARE MUCH LESS LETHAL AND DESTRUCTIVE THAN IS, SAY,

THE SOVIET SS-20 MISSILE NOW BEING DEPLOYED IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THE EASTERN USSR. ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS WOULD PROVIDE THE NATO COUNTRIES WITH A MEANS OF DEFENDING THEMSELVES AGAINST A MASSIVE ARMORED ATTACK BY THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS ALLIES. SOVIET MILITARY CAPABILITIES HAVE IN RECENT YEARS BEEN STRENGTHENED FAR BEYOND THE USSR'S LEGITIMATE DEFENSIVE REQUIREMENTS. IF THE UNITED STATES AND OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES DECIDE TO DEPLOY ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS, IT WILL BE FOR THE SAKE OF IMPROVING DETERRENCE AND MILITARY STABILITY AND OF REDUCING THE POSSIBILITY OF ATTACK.

I DEEPLY APPRECIATE THE SENTIMENTS THAT LIE BEHIND YOUR EXPRESSED CONCERNS. I AM WILLING TO CONSIDER ARMS CONTROL INITIATIVES INVOLVING THE ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON. IN PARTICULAR, THE WESTERN COUNTRIES MIGHT WELL FOREGO DEPLOYMENT OF THIS WEAPON IN RETURN FOR SOME APPROPRIATE SOVIET RESTRAINT IN THE OFFENSIVE ARMS WHICH THE USSR CONTINUES TO DEPLOY AGAINST WESTERN EUROPE WITHOUT MODERATION.

I THANK YOU ALSO FOR YOUR RESPONSE TO MY CONCERN ON THE GROWING DANGER TO WORLD PEACE PRESENTED IN THE HORN OF AFRICA. THIS QUESTION IS A DIFFICULT ONE, AND I AM REASSURED BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT INDIA AND AMERICA SHARE
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SIMILAR VIEWS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ACHIEVING A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT.

I DEEPLY APPRECIATE YOUR HAVING WRITTEN TO PRESIDENT BREZHNEV, POINTING OUT THE DANGER INVOLVED IN THE MILITARY BUILD-UP IN ETHIOPIA. WE, TOO, HAVE SPOKEN TO THE SOVIET UNION, BOTH ABOUT THE DANGER OF AN ETHIOPIAN ATTACK INTO SOMALIA AND ABOUT THE EFFECT OF SOVIET ACTION ON OUR EFFORT TO LIMIT OUR MILITARY PRESENCES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA. I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED BY CLEAR AND MOUNTING EVIDENCE OF DIRECT SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN THE DIRECTION OF THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY EFFORT.

WE CONTINUE OUR STRONG SUPPORT OF THE OAU MEDIATION EFFORT, AND I BELIEVE A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT IS POSSIBLE. A KEY TO SUCCESS IN SUCH A NEGOTIATED EFFORT, HOWEVER, IS THE WILLINGNESS OF SOMALIA TO WITHDRAW FROM THE OGADEN AS A FIRST STEP IN AN OVERALL SOLUTION. ANY SOLUTION THAT LEADS TO STABILITY AND PEACE IN THE AREA SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET AND CUBAN FORCES FROM THE OGADEN AND THE PROGRESSIVE REDUCTION OF THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA. WE HAVE TALKED DIRECTLY TO

SIAD ABOUT A COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAW HIS FORCES AND HAVE SUGGESTED THAT VARIOUS OTHER STATES WHICH HAVE FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH SOMALIA DO SO AS WELL. IN ORDER TO REASSURE SIAD BARRE, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT THAT ARRANGEMENTS BE MADE FOR OUTSIDE OBSERVERS IN THE OGADEN AFTER A SOMALI WITHDRAWAL. THESE CAN OBSERVE THE WITHDRAWAL AND CEASE-FIRE, AND ENSURE THAT THERE WILL BE NO REPRISALS AGAINST ETHNIC SOMALIS IN THE AREA.

WE HAVE DISCUSSED OUR IDEAS FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION WITH THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AND I HOPE THAT THEY WILL COOPERATE MORE FULLY WITH THE OAU MEDIATION EFFORT. ALTHOUGH OUR RELATIONS WITH ADDIS ABABA ARE NOT AS GOOD AS I WOULD LIKE, I RECENTLY SENT A SPECIAL EMISSARY TO EXPLAIN TO
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LIEUTENANT COLONEL MENGISTU OUR DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH HIS GOVERNMENT AND OUR SUPPORT OF MANY OF THE GOALS OF HIS REVOLUTION. SINCE YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA, I BELIEVE THAT YOUR INFLUENCE IN ENCOURAGING BOTH COUNTRIES TO JOIN IN SEEKING A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WOULD BE VALUABLE. I LOOK FORWARD TO A CONTINUING EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH YOU ON THIS SITUATION.

SECRETARY VANCE HAS SENT ME A REPORT ON THE STEPS THAT HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO FOLLOW UP ON THE BILATERAL ISSUES THAT WE DISCUSSED. I AM PLEASED TO SEE THAT QUITE A BIT HAS ALREADY BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AND THAT MORE IS UNDERWAY. I SUGGEST THAT WHEN WE MEET AGAIN WE REVIEW THE PROGRESS MADE AND SEE WHERE MORE DIRECTION IS NEEDED.

I DEEPLY APPRECIATE THE FLEXIBILITY THAT YOU SHOWED IN ADJUSTING THE TIMING OF YOUR SPEECH TO THE UNITED NATIONS TO ACCOMMODATE MY SCHEDULING PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM THE NATO MEETING IN WASHINGTON. WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO VISIT WASHINGTON ON EITHER MAY 26 OR JUNE 13-14? AMBASSADOR GOHEEN CAN DISCUSS THIS IN DETAIL WITH YOUR STAFF. ROSALYNN AND I LOOK FORWARD EAGERLY TO MEETING YOU AGAIN. YOU WILL RECEIVE THE MOST CORDIAL OF RECEPTIONS FROM US AND FROM THE WHOLE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

WITH WARMEST REGARDS, SINCERELY, JIMMY CARTER

HIS EXCELLENCY
MORARJI DESAI
PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA
NEW DELHI. UNQUOTE. VANCE

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